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ABSTRACT

A commission charged with examining the process of Pennsylvania school board policy making as it relates to the roles of the board and the superintendent expresses a number of concerns and makes recommendations. Broad areas identified as needing continuous attention by boards and superintendents are the appraisal of goals and objectives, inservice training, communication, and evaluation of results. Specific recommendations are made in these areas that are intended to strengthen and maintain the working relationships of school boards and superintendents. (Author/MLF)

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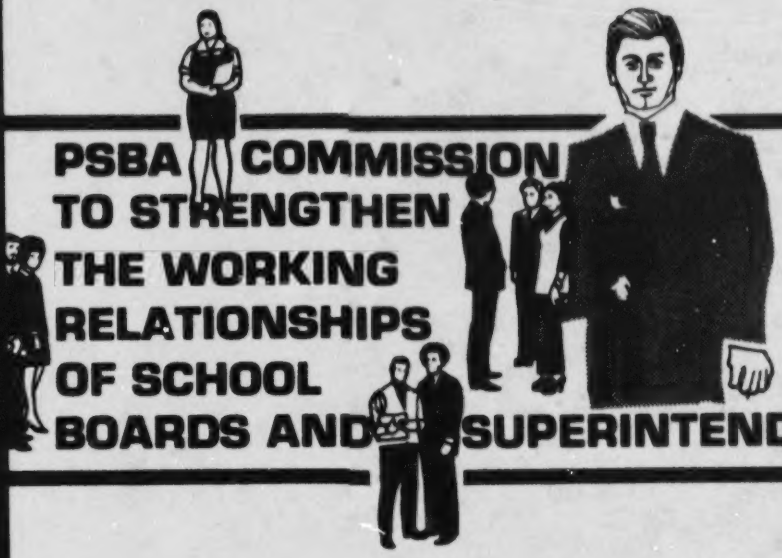

PSBA COMMISSION TO STRENGTHEN THE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS OF SCHOOL BOARDS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

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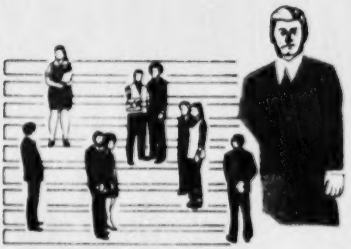


STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The president of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, Ralph E. Dougherty, Jr., appointed a special PSBA statewide commission in 1977 composed of 32 school directors, district superintendents and intermediate unit executive directors. Representation was divided between school directors and administrators and covered the various geographic areas of the state and regional governance of the association. PSBA officers and staff served as ex-officio members.

Mr. Dougherty charged the advisory body, officially titled the **PSBA Commission to Strengthen the Working Relationships of School Boards and Superintendents**, at its first meeting in February 1977: "To examine, and provide input into, the process of school board policymaking as it relates to the roles of the board and the superintendent. Additionally, it is to provide a forum for discussion, review and evaluation of the relationship and roles of boards and superintendents."

At the initial meeting of the commission, Mr. Dougherty said, "In your deliberations I seek your help to provide leadership that will result in the improvement of local school governance for public education. We need to demonstrate this

leadership by maximizing the talent of each commission member so that a format to include both positions and recommendations will result from your labors.

"Most importantly we need to draw from your own experiences and backgrounds without seeking to serve one's personal self-interest. Our goals should include a collective response to the needs of local school government, subordinating ourselves to the general welfare of our purpose."

The Challenge

The common interest of the school board and superintendent must be the creation of a successful educational system which effectively serves the purpose of its community.

Pennsylvania's 4,545 school directors meeting with, and acting upon, the recommendations of their 505 superintendents of schools provides for the unique mix between local lay control and professional control of the state's public education programs. Situations often surface between these two interests that sometimes upset the delicate balance and respective authority between elected school directors and their chief executive officer.* There are admittedly gray areas where the respective responsibilities of board and superintendent are not clearly delineated.

In reviewing this relationship, the commission members agreed upon three comprehensive statements. These fundamental guidelines served to articulate the commission's charge and the multitude of ideas, concerns and suggestions which surfaced during its 10-month study. The commission believes:

- **The role and function of a school board and a superintendent need to be well**

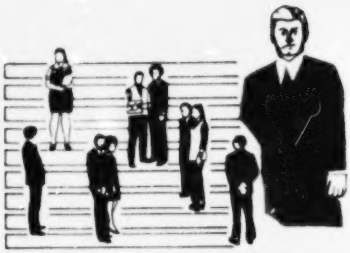
* The following sections of the School Code delineate some of the powers of the school board and the superintendent. Sections 301, 507, 510, 1001, 1005, 1076 and 1081.

understood. Each local school district should develop written policy regarding the role of the board of school directors and the superintendent. Such policy should include expectations of both parties, appropriate and responsible goals, and agreed upon evaluation procedures to be used within the school district. The foregoing shall be within the framework of Pennsylvania law and federal law and local control of the public schools. This understanding should be broadly and continuously communicated to the school staff and the community.

- **The concept of effective school management must be the mutual objective of the school board and the superintendent.** General understanding of management responsibilities is the basis for the establishment of a more harmonious relationship between the membership of the board, its superintendent, and the supervisory staff of the school district. Management responsibilities must be extended beyond the role of the superintendent. The goals and objectives of the school district must be articulated, supported and guided by all levels of school management. It is imperative that the board, through its superintendent, foster a management team concept that is practiced and implemented at the local level. In order to develop such a program and its understanding, it is necessary to have written policies defining the role of the board, the superintendent and other school management. Inherent in this process must be the ability of each group to understand its individual and collective roles. Paramount is the requirement to communicate, openly and candidly, with

each other, the total school staff and the community.

- **Change is inevitable in the operation of public schools. Therefore, an effective process of evalution of such change is imperative.** Recognizing that change is inevitable, one must realize that turnover of school directors and superintendents may result in differences of opinion, revised goals and objectives and varying community expectations. It is helpful then, to review other successful school management patterns or programs, and to use the organizational structure of the local school district to make the necessary corrections.



SECTION ONE

THE CONCERNS

Education in a democratic society must provide for public control of the educational enterprise, and at the same time provide for the utilization of available technical knowledge. In America, this concept of the educational design has been expressed through the local lay school board and its executive officer, the professional superintendent of schools. Each has important functions to perform.

The board in representing the public sets the general direction in which the schools are to be operated. The superintendent provides the technical and professional competence to implement board directives and to manage the schools. The extent to which the board and the superintendent discharge their proper functions, or infringe on each other's responsibilities, impacts directly on the effectiveness of the school program.

A board and a superintendent, sincerely interested in providing effective educational leadership, will continuously assess their way of working together. Their concerns will include a proper division of responsibility as to how each may serve the educational enterprise efficiently and effectively.

Agreements and understandings will rest on mutual confidence and trust, and on fulfillment of basic expectations which each has of the other.

The commission believes that most of the concerns that arise regarding the effective relationship of a board of school directors and superintendent relate directly to these three basic principles:

- The **role and function** of the board and superintendent.
- The **planning process** for educational programs, services and community needs.
- The operational functions of the public school system flowing out of **policy development and implementation.**

The commission believes several considerations in each of these areas would be advisable to promote improved working relationships between the parties. These considerations include a complete understanding of the role and function of the board and the superintendent, both legally and operationally. The board must be recognized and accepted as the policy-making body, responsible for setting goals for the system and developing the framework for the planning of the future priorities of the district's needs.

Role and Function

School directors must remember that their legal authority and power is only in full force and effect when they are legally convened in public board business. The general public may still view (and rightfully so) the board member as a decisionmaker and policysetter during private or other individual public appearances. However, school directors must remain aware of the fact that their comments do not reflect **board action** until such time as the board meets and acts on such matters.

School directors also need to recognize that the board does make decisions which are binding upon all members. Such decisions can occur as a result of a 5-4 vote as well as a 9-0 vote. The board's business is dictated by the actions of the board by official vote. Individual school directors may not always agree with the final decision of the board. Future board operations will ultimately rest upon the supportive or destructive approach by which school directors disagree. Further, the community's assessment of how the board is able to function will also be influenced by the manner in which consensus or disagreement is evidenced.

Personnel management may be the setting for many public controversies that grow out of the school board-superintendent relationship. Almost invariably, personnel problems eventually reach a point at which they must be heard in public. When this happens, particularly if the problems are serious and persistent, both the board and the superintenent carry a shared responsibility for proper functioning in the area of personnel. Not only must an adequate staff be provided to operate the school program and the auxiliary services, but an atmosphere conducive to optimum productivity must be maintained.

Some school directors still try to act independently of other board members and outside official board meetings on personal matters. Such procedures carry inherent dangers for proper board functioning and for board relationship with the superintendent. This practice can lead to an usurping of administrative responsibilities and hinder the board in the discharge of its proper duties.

Important public announcements pertaining to the schools should be made either by the school superintendent, the board president or jointly. However, the superintendent is usually in the best position to handle such announcements. It is important that all matters, especially those pertaining to personnel, be handled through the

superintendent's office. Board "over concern" for the housekeeping details of operating the school system is a practice the board should avoid. Involvement in such details prevents other more important concerns from receiving proper attention.

Leadership is a key component of effective management whether it comes from the superintendent, the board, an individual on the board or a combination of the people charged with the concerns of the public school system.

A key leadership figure quite naturally is the superintendent. This person must be the keystone in building an effective management leadership team throughout the district in the day-to-day administration of the school program. The superintendent should treat all school directors on an equal basis. Any semblance of favoritism will result in loss of confidence on the part of other board members. It is very important that the superintendent exercise strong directive leadership in taking action, planning, advising, recommending and in implementing board decisions. Some boards have assumed administrative responsibilities because of the lack of leadership of their superintendents.

A parallel leadership figure is the board president. This person should strive to keep the board perspective geared to policy development, planning, evaluation and the avoidance of crisis management. The board president can do much to prevent or reduce troublesome points in meetings which tend to inflame or create "splitting" situations between the board and its chief executive officer. The board president can ensure complete board involvement while helping avoid the personal confrontations which may flow out of issue-oriented decisions. Much of the board's effectiveness, therefore, is determined by the quality of its meetings. Properly planned, well-organized and efficiently conducted meetings are essential for effective board

operation. Wise leadership by the board president is a must.

Planning

Planning is the vehicle through which the board should continue to focus its direction and attention. Boards that **fail to plan** properly for the future are more likely to get caught up with the day-to-day **administration** of the district which immediately tends to strain board-superintendent relationships. A board that lacks policy direction is more likely to find itself acting in crisis situations. Decisionmaking becomes extremely difficult when pressure situations are constantly treated under trying circumstances. Boards and superintendents that approach policy development and future planning in a cooperative fashion will most likely avoid the conflict of roles that tends to result when common objectives are misunderstood or unknown.

It is essential that planning is done in an open, constructive fashion, with all possible alternatives being made available to the board for its deliberation. Keeping the board informed is a major responsibility of the superintendent. If the board is not kept informed about all important matters pertaining to the operation of the schools, difficulties are sure to arise. The informational function is one of the superintendent's most important responsibilities. Unlike certain other problem areas, deficiencies in this function are usually due to a failure on the part of the superintendent. Only under an atmosphere of full disclosure of all alternatives available to the board and through an openness of thought and discussion, can the board-superintendent relationship survive. The consequences of half-truths, or half-facts, can be disasterous whether they come from the board or from the superintendent.

Policy Guidance

Within the area of policy development a clear understanding of the role and function of the board and superintendent should be communicated. An organizational structure, denoting the manner in which the system functions, will help to provide a better understanding of the roles of the two parties and a strengthening of the board-superintendent relationship. Such a structure should include job or position descriptions which clearly identify the responsibilities and authorities of the board and the administrative staff; the identification of various levels of management from the chief executive officer through the first level of supervision; and the operational manner in which the parties interplay in the organizational structure in given circumstances.

Policies concerning the public's involvement in the governance of the public schools are essential. A procedure for local citizens to participate and provide input to the board should be in writing and available to all interested persons. Recognizing the ultimate responsibility for the operation of the public system rests with the elected officials, the public can participate in the activities of the system. When properly identified, the public can serve to help support a management team relationship that will prove beneficial to all parties concerned and, ultimately, the recipients of the system — the students.

Community involvement can happen in a number of ways. Advisory boards or committees, special purpose ad hoc groups, parent-citizen liaison groups and other similar structures are available to the board and the administration. Community involvement will ultimately be measured by the manner in which the various publics of the school district have input into the formation of board policy.

An informed community, as an informed board, is more likely to provide the support

necessary to carry out the needs of the public school system. Surprises should be kept to an absolute minimum. A community that is surprised on the need for tax increases, school construction, staff reductions and other similar decisions will most likely react in a negative fashion.

Simiarly, a superintendent who is surprised by the board on direction and planning, or on a change in previously discussed board philosophy, will most likely look upon the area in question with concern and doubt. Likewise, a board that is constantly surprised by its superintendent will never gain the complete confidence it needs to deliberate in a responsible fashion. Surprises lead to suspicion and suspicion leads to mistrust. Policy development in role identification, organizational structure, planning, needs assessments and evaluation of the results of management decisions will reduce the possibility of surprise and will unquestionably strengthen the relationship between boards and superintendents.

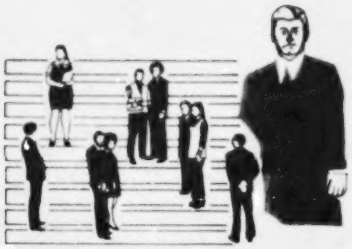
Summary

The following areas, without regard to priority ranking, offer the greatest potential for a breakdown in sound board-superintendent relationships.

- **Failure to understand the difference between policy and administrative rule.** Each party must make a determined effort to understand and respect the position of the other in this all important area.
- **Failure to make a concerted effort to understand the proper role and function of the board and the superintendent.** It is very important that both parties recognize their legal and ethical responsibilities and duties.
- **Failure to keep students the center of the decision-making process.** In seeking to

define their relationships, both parties must not lose sight of their main responsibilities — students.

- **Failure to keep each other informed.** Surprises can be a deadly action on the part of either party. Nothing disturbs the board-superintendent relationship more than to find that either party has withheld information on a matter which the other considers important.
- **Failure to be open-minded.** Both parties need to be tolerant. Both the board and the superintendent have a "right to be wrong in working towards established goals". Learning from past experiences will hopefully lead to improved decisionmaking.
- **Failure to grow intellectually.** Either party which refuses to grow in wisdom and knowledge, or participate in continuing inservice training, invites the mistrust of the other. School board service is not a "once-a-month-and-done" position. The responsibilities of the superintendent and other management level positions do not end at the office or school door.
- **Failure to exert leadership.** The superintendent must be willing to make recommendations when the board is faced with difficult decisions. The board must be willing to exercise leadership in the community. Both must be willing to explain and support the decisions they have made.
- **Failure to assume decision-making role.** Though some boards recognize their roles, they choose to leave the decisionmaking to the superintendent. Superintendents should not be forced to initiate policy by default.



SECTION TWO

DEVELOPMENT OF SOLUTIONS

The commission in its review and research found that four broad areas need continuous attention by boards and superintendents: (1) appraisal of goals and objectives, (2) inservice training, (3) communications and (4) evaluation of results.

Goals and Objectives

Information on the responsibilities of the school system, the needs and planning which flow out of these responsibilities and the continued inservice education needed to stay informed and current, are all prerequisites to the evaluation of individual and group success in meeting established and known objectives. Through the establishment of written policies, which communicate the overall objectives and goals of each local system, and through administrative rules, which interpret and apply these policies, a clearer assessment of goals can be reached.

Inservice Training

Members of the commission further concluded that the opportunity for improved board-superintendent relationships will occur if

the issues and problems of public education are better understood. Consequently, structured, well-planned, competent inservice education is a crucial element in fostering positive board-superintendent dialogue.

Inservice training is available through many forums: self-inservice through individual effort and initiative; and group inservice, either at the local level or through state and national organizations. However, there is no way that an individual can function effectively through mere self-inservice. Self-study will surely help, but is far from sufficient to cope with today's educational programs and issues.

Group inservice, through planned activites of local boards and administrative staff in concert with other organizations, will afford additional resources which cannot be achieved through self-inservice programs. School business, like many other aspects of modern living, requires a broader perspective of all the influences affecting society and public education. School directors, who do not take their responsibilities seriously and do not engage in personal inservice education, are doing a disservice to the board and the community-at-large. School directors, who seek personal inservice opportunities and the broader perspective of group inservice, will unquestionably have improved their capabilities to perform on behalf of the public interest.

Just as the professional staff is expected to remain competent in their field of expertise, inservice education is also expected of school directors, superintendents and other administrative staff. Being responsible for the operation of a public school system — and the future of its students — is a challenging task and requires a broad base of knowledge and information in order to make intelligent decisions.

An uninformed school director can create undue hardship on the board and administration and, ultimately, the entire school system. An uninformed board may make decisions based on

innuendo and hearsay, rather than fact. Superintendents who have not kept themselves fully informed about today's changing needs find themselves walking a precarious path of isolation. Needless to say, school business is often the single-largest "employer" in a given area. Multimillion dollar budgets need informed, responsible decisionmakers. Inservice education and training can provide the understanding needed to ensure proper management and control of the educational system and the public's tax dollars.

Boards not appropriating funds for proper inservice training are short-changing their community in terms of understanding the nature and needs of effective school operations. School directors must find the best way to obtain the best possible information to function effectively. School directors should recognize their responsibility to obtain adequate information and background to make informed judgments according to their individual needs and the needs of the board.

The increasingly high turnover rate of elected school directors is seen as a clear indication that much more inservice will be required if future board actions are to be made by informed public officials. Generally, most school officials believe that inservice training for students, staff and administration is important to the learning process. Consequently, there should be no question that those individuals responsible for the management of the system should also take full advantage of all available inservice opportunities planned and designed for better understanding of effective operations of the public school system.

Communications

A major obligation of school directors and their superintendents is to ensure that the public school system is managed well — that people

within the district are able to perform their assigned jobs as effectively and efficiently as possible. But as schools serve the community, boards and superintendents must also ensure that relations between the system and the citizenry are as positive and mutually supportive as possible.

Both tasks have one management function in common — planned, organized and effective communications. Effective management and communications cannot be separated. Further, an elected school board, and the administrators hired to carry out public policy, have a mandate to communicate with students, parents and the taxpaying public.

Targeted communication programs, involving the staff and community, must be managed with the same expertise that other programs require. It is a cooperative effort between the board and school management that should set in motion the necessary framework, or operating climate, which reflects to the public: "These are your schools and we're working to make them better."

Such an attitude will strengthen the ties between school officials and the community at large and ultimately the working relationship between the superintendent and the board of school directors.

Boards and administrators may think they can afford to put off giving time and attention to their communication function, especially when the system does not face major crises. Unfortunately, major crises often develop from a lack of communications and the failure to resolve "minor" problems during quieter times. Effective school board-school management relationships require an on-going communications program at all times, not just during a crisis.

It is wise for boards and superintendents to review their communication policy and examine

the manner in which both parties communicate internally and externally to their various publics.

More important than the means used to communicate with the public is the manner in which the public can communicate with the district. Each district has the responsibility to let the public know: (1) where to get information on a given topic; (2) who can give credible and responsible information; and (3) when that person is available. Effective communications do not just happen. They require policy direction, planning, realistic objectives, management talent, dependability and regularity.

Evaluation

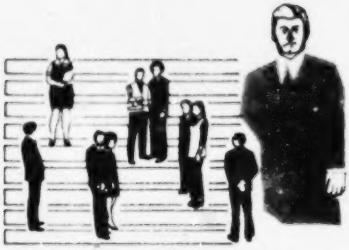
Assessment of performance, either program or individual, should be an on-going process. Evaluation should be encouraged and standards set in accordance with established goals and objectives. Job descriptions become critical in this process, for unless the scope of responsibility and authority of an individual in a given position is known, performance cannot be assessed.

The board also needs to critically assess its own performance in determining the direction given to the system. Self-evaluation of the board's performance is an extremely valuable part of the total evaluation process. Evaluation of performance — board, superintendent, administrative staff, and all other personnel — is a necessary part of accountability.

Maintaining open and honest communication between the superintendent and the board is an essential part of performance evaluation and accountability. Further, the manner in which the two groups communicate has a direct bearing in maintaining public confidence in the eyes of the citizenry.

Sometimes the relationship between the superintendent and the board appears to be secretive, noncommunicative and unresponsive to the general public. The vigilant school board and

superintendent can turn this kind of situation around — or better, keep it from happening. But not without deliberate action by school officials.



SECTION THREE

RECOMMENDATIONS

The commission made specific recommendations to improve, strengthen and maintain the working relationships of school boards and superintendents. These considerations should be viewed as positive recommendations, to be adapted, reviewed and modified at the local level wherever applicable. No attempt was made by the commission to rank the various recommendations in order of importance.

Each of the following sections contains general overview statements with recommendations covering the four main areas identified in the report.

Policy Development

Direction through proper policy guidance and development undergrids the entire operation of the public school system. The relationship of the school board to the superintendent is critical to effective policy development. Consequently each party must have a strong comprehension of of their respective roles and function in the governance of the school system.

The legislative role of the school board embraces at least three primary functions —

planning, policy guidance and evaluation. The administrative role of the superintendent embraces several primary functions — planning, organizing, managing, recommending, evaluating, directing and reporting.

All other functions of a school board or superintendent can be related to the above primary functions. If these concepts are well understood and observed, much difficulty that arises in the working relationship of the two interests can be avoided.

The commission, therefore, recommends that:

- Boards of school directors and superintendents should give highest priority to policy development.
- School boards should accept the responsibility for establishing policy direction that guides the superintendent and the school enterprise.
- Both the school board and the superintendent should involve school staff, students and the general public at appropriate stages of policy development.
- Policy statements should be reduced to writing, be as broad as possible and cover every major aspect of school district governance and operation.
- Board policy should be continuously reviewed and updated.
- Written board policy should be readily accessible.
- Board policy should reflect the needs of the community that the district serves and should be reflected in the district's goals.

Inservice Training

The commission recognizes that school directors should have access to the best information possible in order to participate in the decision-making process in the most informed

and intelligent manner. It also recognizes the desired objectives of management inservice training at all levels of supervisory positions within the school district. The commission believes that adequate financial resources must be allocated at the local level in order to achieve stated inservice goals and objectives.

The commission, therefore, recommends that:

- Boards should adopt appropriate policies which encourage participation in preservice, new orientation programs and ongoing inservice activities.
- School districts should provide adequate funds annually for school board and administrative inservice training.
- Boards and superintendents should be encouraged to attend inservice programs at the local, state and national level.

Management — Leadership

The commission views the management-leadership concept as a cooperative effort involving the school board and all supervisory and school management level staff through the office of the board's chief executive officer, the superintendent. Through this process the board is better able to appraise the goals and objectives of the district and the evaluation of management performance.

The commission recognizes that the leadership team must keep children as the focal point of its decision-making process. It is essential that school leadership uphold the major reason for the public school's existence — to serve the unique needs of individual children in their physical, emotional and mental development.

The commission, further believes that school management should be dedicated to representing the general public interest. The commission feels that attempts by management level groups to unionize would be detrimental to the general public interest. However, the

management-leadership process must be more than a "paper concept", and its implementation must be fostered at the local level. The success of this concept depends directly upon the sincerity, integrity and dedication of both the board and school management.

The commission, therefore, recommends that:

- School districts should establish, and adopt as board policy, charts with line-staff relationship; position descriptions of responsibilities; and designation of proper authority for managing local school operations.
- School districts should develop a plan of compensation which treats management personnel in accordance with established duties and responsibilities.
- School districts should develop and explain policies which identify school management compensation ranges and fringe benefits.
- School districts should develop a method of ensuring that all levels of school management are engaged in management training programs appropriate for various levels of responsibility.
- School districts should have a stated policy for school management evaluation criteria and for involvement of supervisory management personnel in appraising and recommending such criteria.
- School boards should adopt an appropriate method for annually assessing the performance of the superintendent.
- School boards should adopt methods for self-evaluation.
- Boards and superintendents should annually establish their respective goals and objectives which are consistent with the district's planning.

Communications

The commission believes that an elected school board, and the administrators hired to carry out public policy, have a mandate to communicate to all citizens.

The commission believes that planned, organized and effective communications are essential if the school's employes are to perform their assigned tasks as effectively and efficiently as possible. Effective school management and communication responsibilities cannot be separated. The commission asserts that improved understanding between school officials and the community-at-large hinges directly on the working relationship between the board and the superintendent. The relationship of the local school board to government and its place in the governmental structure are important considerations in school board operation. An understanding of this relationship contributes to more effective leadership and communication by the local board.

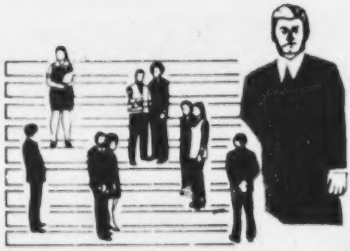
Governing boards of school directors are generally one of the largest (if not the largest) employers in local communities. The news media cannot satisfy the total communication needs that such an employer requires to ensure that the district operates efficiently and effectively on a day-to-day basis. The commission supports the position, therefore, that planned communication programs (requiring some public expenditures) which can be supported, evaluated and measured, provide a long term benefit for students. Such programs are not frills. The commission feels that honest, straightforward two-way communication programs between local school officials and their constituents are absolutely necessary in retaining public confidence and support for public schools.

The commission, therefore, recommends that:

- Boards should have an approved and responsible communications policy which

is shared with, and understood by, the school-community.

- School districts should prepare a board-superintendent brochure and other handouts for public board meetings which include, for example, legal requirements of the board and the superintendent's office, meeting dates and times, and how the public may address the board.
- Boards and superintendents should develop a staff newsletter which goes to all employes in order that the staff has an opportunity to better understand board-superintendent business and operations.
- School boards should establish guidelines and responsibility for communication with the news media on a regular and on-going basis.
- Boards should establish communication systems that will provide responsive feedback between the board and its various publics.
- School boards should provide an annual report to the community explaining the school district's programs, services and its progress.



SUMMARY

AN ATMOSPHERE OF TRUST AND UNDERSTANDING

In order to build and maintain an effective board-superintendent relationship several points must be considered.

There must first be a self-awareness of each person's role and responsibility in the system. This understanding and awareness flows out of policy, and the honesty and integrity of the individuals working together in their commitment to the public school system. The atmosphere of trust and understanding is individually and collectively earned by past performance. And, although each may have an individual style of leadership that needs to be recognized, there must be a visibility of unity in purpose that is generated at the top, and that ultimately works its way to all levels of school management and district operations. Openness, honesty and individual integrity are key ingredients in fostering an atmosphere of trust and understanding.

The size of a district and the community has some relationship to effectively nuturing this process. Smaller communities may be able to personalize the district plans and objectives and deal with troubling probiems on a one-to-one basis

more adequately to achieve a positive atmosphere of trust and understanding. However, as community size increases and local officials find themselves less able to personalize the district's needs, it becomes increasingly important that the communications vehicles used and the manner in which the board conducts its business, are thoroughly scrutinized to ensure the public's understanding of the decision-making process. **No one should ever lose sight of who is the "boss" because everyone, including the board, must ultimately answer to the public's concerns.**

The board president again surfaces as a key person who can promote an atmosphere of trust and understanding. The president's leadership during board meetings, public discussions, and the attitude displayed toward the chief executive will certainly affect the way people interpret an effective working relationship.

Board members and superintendents must be supportive of the decisions reached. Not that both parties should strive for different (or better) decisions if they are not in total agreement but, certainly, the manner in which change is sought is paramount to the credibility and the ultimate degree of trust and understanding that is generated. Individuals can disagree but being able to disagree amicably is an important aspect of the general welfare of the public schools and the community that supports them. When decisions are reached, regardless of their outcome, board and superintendents have the **responsibility** to communicate fairly, honestly and openly. In the end result, dealing with issues will keep discussions at a level which promotes positive and responsible school management.

Many issues in board operation and school administration are traditional to the educational scene. However, as time passes, new facts are uncovered, new developments create new perspectives, and other changes occur. Therefore, school boards and school

administrators who wish to provide effective leadership and who wish to seek improvement in the structure and procedures which govern their functions must continually assess school board operation and school administration in this constantly changing context. It has been the purpose here to assist in such an assessment.

The challenge is plainly before local school boards and superintendents. They must continue to improve their operational procedures and the quality of their leadership while relating themselves to the crucial issues of a complex, rapidly changing society. Local control of education, as manifested through local school boards and superintendents, has long been a cornerstone of American education. It cannot continue as such if school boards and superintendents permit themselves to become obstacles to educational progress.

The commission believes that the working relationship between boards of school directors and superintendents can be best strengthened by both parties:

- Keeping students the center of the decision-making process.
- Understanding the difference between policy and administrative rule.
- Understanding the legal role and function of the two parties.
- Keeping each other informed.
- Being tolerant and open-minded.
- Participating in continuing inservice training.
- Exerting positive leadership when faced with difficult decisions.
- Assuming their proper decision-making role.

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* Mr. Williams' picture was unavailable

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